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THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

November 14, 1984

Honorable George Deukmejian  
Governor of California  
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Deukmejian:

The presence of higher than acceptable levels of selenium in the Kesterson Reservoir has presented governments and private sectors--both agricultural and environmental--with difficult issues. Kesterson is, of course, only a symptom of broad agricultural drainage problems found throughout the San Joaquin Valley which threaten several hundred thousand acres of highly productive farmland. Because local, State and Federal governments share legal responsibilities for resolution of these issues we must act together aggressively if we are to eliminate these threats to our economy and environment.

Since my letter to you in August on this subject, much has been done to gather and assimilate the very best scientific data possible. Joint State/Federal studies have brought together some of our Nation's foremost scientists from a broad range of disciplines to study environmental concerns and to examine possible solutions.

The long-term solution, as the Congress and the legislature must well understand, will be extremely expensive and will require weighing interests of various private sector and local and State constituencies. For example, while it may be possible to implement the original 1965 Congressional plan to transport and dispose of drainage water in San Francisco Bay, this option could cost as much as \$5 billion and could threaten Bay water quality. On the other hand, building an in-valley treatment facility may not be technically feasible, could mean sacrificing the Wildlife Refuge and may cost as much as \$4 billion. In the absence of an environmentally and economically acceptable proposal to handle drainage, ceasing irrigation on lands on the west side of the San Joaquin River may be the only alternative. Needless to say, this would have a devastating impact on agricultural and economic interests west of the San Joaquin River.

Implications of alternative solutions must be fully explored in the Environmental Impact Statement now being drafted by a technical working team based in Sacramento. Our staffs must clearly delineate all issues to ensure that the EIS is proper and responsible.

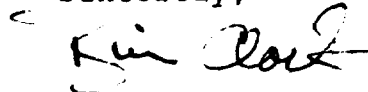
Even a long-term solution to drainage issues, with agreement by governments and private sectors upon the implementation of any plan, would require time, diligence and money. In the interim period, there are several pressing events to be addressed.

Both the California Assembly and the State Water Resources Control Board have scheduled hearings. The Assembly hearing will be directed to the San Joaquin Valley agricultural drainage issue. The Board will examine solely the narrow question of Kesterson. Further, on November 21, the Board intends to release a draft Cleanup and Abatement Order which may affect the direction of our combined efforts and alternatives. This order could go as far as to halt irrigation of Valley farms.

The State-Federal coordination team should develop and present testimony jointly before both the Assembly and the Control Board. Further, the team should meet soon to review and evaluate the United States Geological Survey synoptic survey, available data from all agencies, and the range of alternatives available to address immediate problems. The team also must present a full analysis of alternative solutions to the long-term agricultural drainage problem in the Valley.

If all parties work together as partners, including the Congress, we can be confident of solutions which will protect the health and well being of our citizens, environment and economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Wm Clark", with a stylized flourish at the end.

William Clark